

SIXTY-SIXTH OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY.

UNDER the President's second call for troops an order was obtained from Governor Dennison to raise a regiment of infantry in Champaign County. The order was dated October 1, 1861. On the 17th day of December following the regiment was mustered into the United States service, numbering eight hundred and fifty men. Six companies and about fifty men of other companies were from Champaign County, two from Delaware, one from Union, and one from Logan. From the day of muster until the day of departure for the field the regiment received additions to the number of one hundred and thirty.

On the 17th of January, 1862, tents were struck at Camp McArthur, near Urbana, and the regiment proceeded to join the forces of General Lander on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in West Virginia. Colonel Candy reported to General Lander at New Creek, where the first field camp was made. The first active service of the regiment was the campaign against Romney.

In the early part of February, 1862, General Lander concentrated his troops at two points on the railroad, commencing his movements at nightfall. The troops marched all night, forded a deep and rapid stream, and by daylight were fifteen miles from their starting points. General Jackson, however, had evacuated Romney, and retreated through the mountains upon Winchester, while our army fell back toward the railroad and encamped on the Highlands, without tents or blankets. The first night snow fell to the depth of twelve inches.

General Shields succeeded General Lander, and the Sixty-Sixth regiment was led along the railroad to Martinsburg, where it was stationed as provost-guard for the space of about three weeks. Again, at Winchester and Strasburg, it performed the duties of provost and general guard for the immediate vicinities. Following the victorious division of General Shields to New Market it was assigned to the Second Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General O. S. Terry. After a short but rapid march to Harrisonburg the division received orders to make a long and tedious march across the Blue Ridge to Fredericksburg, on the Rappahannock. The march occupied ten days. At Fredericksburg the Sixty-Sixth, the Fifth, Seventh, and Twenty-Ninth Ohio regiments formed the Third Brigade, under command of General E. B. Tyler. Remaining one day at Fredericksburg the division received orders to counter-march for the relief of General Banks in the Shenandoah Valley, and for the protection of Washington. General Jackson was in possession of nearly the whole Valley, and was making demonstrations against the capital. The division marched back by way of Manassas to Front Royal, in Warren County. From Front Royal the regiment accompanied General Shields up the right bank of the Shenandoah until arriving at the bridge across that river at Port Republic.

On the morning of June 9th General Tyler's brigade, with two regiments of the Fourth Brigade, were in line of battle awaiting the attack of the enemy, numbering thirty-two thousand, under General Stonewall Jackson. At sunrise the enemy opened with artillery, and soon made a general attack with heavy columns of infantry. In this battle the Sixty-Sixth acted a conspicuous part in defending a battery of seven guns on the left of the line. The enemy had possession of these guns three times and as many times were driven from them by the regiment. So quickly was the enemy compelled to abandon its ground that it had no time to turn the artillery upon the National lines. The retreat being ordered on the right, the whole line was compelled to pass a few rods behind the Sixty-Sixth. As the Fifth Ohio approached it deployed upon the right, the enemy was driven about two hundred yards. The force immediately in front of the reg-

iment consisted of a full brigade of Virginians and Wheat's battalion of Louisianians. The force under General Tyler, numbering about twenty-seven hundred men, held General Jackson's army in complete check for five hours and a half, not moving a rod, until an order for retreat was sent by General Shields. The regiment lost one hundred and nine men of the four hundred engaged. The division fell back to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad by way of Front Royal and at this place was broken up.

In July, the Sixty-Sixth regiment, with its brigade, was ordered to join General Pope and reported at Sperryville, where it was re-enforced by the Twenty-Eighth Pennsylvania. General John W Geary was placed in command of the brigade, which was assigned to the Second Division (General Augur's), of what was afterward known as the Twelfth Corps. General Banks commanded the corps at Cedar Mountain, where the Second Division opened the ball. After nightfall the First Brigade was ordered to move forward, and, with a handful of men, Colonel Candy, who assumed command after General Geary had been carried from the field badly wounded, proceeded some distance in the direction of the mountain whereon the enemy was securely perched. In a dense wood, through which the brigade was passing, an ambuscade of the enemy was discovered, but too late to retreat. In the manly fight which ensued one-half of the National troops were killed outright and many wounded. The loss to the regiment was eighty-seven killed and wounded of two hundred in arms. After the defeat at Cedar Mountain the regiment pursued its way with the corps to Antietam, and was actively engaged in that battle.

On the 27th of December, 1862, General J. E. B. Stuart, with two thousand Rebel cavalry, made an attack upon Dumfries, a small town on the Potomac, which was garrisoned by the Fifth, Seventh, and Sixty-Sixth Ohio regiments. The garrison consisted of less than seven hundred muskets. After a sharp and determined fight, lasting several hours, the enemy was driven off. This battle was remarkable on account of the disparity of forces. In the battle of Chancellorsville, the regiment held a position on the right of the plank road and in front of General Hooker's headquarters. The repeated attacks made upon the whole corps were repelled with coolness and courage. When the Eleventh Corps was driven from its works, on the right of the Twelfth Corps, the " White Star Division " received the charges of General Jackson upon the flank, but stood manfully to the post of duty, and checked the Rebel army.

At Gettysburg the Sixty-Sixth regiment held a position near the right of the line. After the battle of Gettysburg the pursuit of Lee brought the regiment again to the Rappahannock. At this time trouble occurred in New York in enforcing the draft, and the Sixty-Sixth was one of the regiments ordered to that city to protect the Government officers in enforcing the laws. On the 29th of August the regiment and brigade disembarked from the steamship Baltic, and encamped on Governor's Island, in New York Harbor. On the 8th of September they commenced the return trip, and reached the Rapidan River on the 17th. A few days' duty, and the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps bade adieu to Virginia and the Army of the Potomac.

Under General Hooker they were transferred to the Army of the Cumberland, in the vicinity of Chattanooga, a distance of twelve hundred miles, which they traveled in seven days. November 24th the regiment proceeded with the division across the creek at the western foot of Lookout Mountain. The stronghold of the enemy was attacked, and a foothold was obtained near the crest of the mountain. After remaining in bivouac all night another advance was made, and the Stars and Stripes were planted on Lookout Mountain at sunrise, November 25th. The resistance of the enemy was not so great a difficulty to be surmounted as the rough ground and ponderous rocks over which the troops had to pass. The battles of Mission Ridge and Ringgold followed. The Sixty-Sixth Ohio participated in both battles. In the latter engagement the First Brigade of the

Second Division charged up a steep and rough mountain in the face of strong force of Rebels, who were posted behind formidable works. Every officer, save one of the Seventh Ohio was killed or wounded. The Sixty-Sixth, under command of Major Thomas McConnell, carried the crest of the mountain and held it against the forces on the summit- Major McConnell sent for ammunition, but received an order to fall back to the railroad. Returning to their camp in Wauhatchie Valley, near Chattanooga, the men of this region

389

became enthusiastic on the subject of re-enlistment. On the loth of December, 1863, the rolls were completed, and the old organization was changed into the Sixty-Sixth Regiment Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry. The Sixty-Sixth was among the first regimental organizations in the whole army to which the term " Veteran Volunteer " was applied. A month of joys and pleasures, a day of leave-taking and tears, and it was again on the road to the field. It was sent to Bridgeport, Alabama, where it remained in camp about three months. Besides an excursion down the Tennessee River on an old steamer, the regiment experienced little active service until the advance on Atlanta commenced. On the 3d of May, 1864, tents were struck at Bridgeport, and the troops in the vicinity moved forward to Chattanooga and joined the corps, which had been consolidated with the Eleventh, and was now called the Twentieth, under command of Major-General Joseph Hooker. The first fight of the long campaign then opening was at Rocky Face Ridge, where the First Brigade, Second Division, Twentieth Corps, charged the enemy's works on the summit, and were repulsed with great slaughter. At Resaca the regiment was kept well to the front, but was fortunate in having no losses beyond a few wounded. In passing around the Alatoona Mountains the Twentieth Corps traveled the Burnt Hickory Road, which crosses Pumpkin Vine Creek a few miles north of Dallas, and leads to New Hope Church.

In the afternoon of May 25th the First Brigade was in the advance, and marched beyond Pumpkin Vine Creek two miles, when it was suddenly attacked by a strong force of the enemy. Deploying rapidly, it held the enemy in check until the whole division had taken position. An advance was made, and the enemy was driven one and a half miles. The Sixty-Sixth at this point lost several men — among them Lieutenant Joseph W Hitt, who had been selected as a brigade staff-officer on account of his courage. For eight days the two armies occupied works within a stone's throw of each other, and both lost heavily in the continuous musketry and cannonading. On the night of June 15th, the regiment was in the advance of a movement against Pine Mountain. "While moving up a ravine the enemy opened upon it with grape and canister from heavy works. Under a galling fire of musketry and four pieces of artillery the regiment approached to within a hundred feet of the works, and each man built for himself a little riflepit. This position gave them control of the enemy's artillery at that point; and there the regiment remained until the next day, when it was relieved by a new regiment. At Culp's farm, at Kenesaw, and at Marietta, at which places battles were fought in quick succession, the regiment acted its part, and also in the important battle of Peachtree Creek.

After the capture of Atlanta the Sixty-Sixth was placed on duty in that city, and remained there until the army of General Sherman took up its line of march to the sea-board. The country knows the history of the pleasant march to Savannah. Reaching the city, the regiment took its position near the left of the line on the Savannah River, within sight of the city. The position was not a favorable one, as the Rebel gunboats on the river could reach the line with enfilading shot. General Geary's division entered Savannah and carried the " white-star " flag through the streets, and received possession of the public and government buildings and the property belonging to them. Following General Sherman the regiment proceeded northward through South Carolina;

thence to Goldsboro' and to Raleigh, it being at the latter place at the end of the war. After the surrender of General Johnston the march was prolonged until the regiment arrived at Washington by way of Richmond. In the march from Richmond to Washington the Twentieth Corps passed over the Chancellorsville battle-field, and had the proud satisfaction of knowing that it had made the entire circuit of the Southern States. The regiment was finally mustered out and paid off at Columbus, July 19, 1865.

The regiment received recruits at various times to the number of three hundred and seventy, and the number of men mustered out at the end of its term of service was two hundred and seventy-two. It lost in killed one hundred and ten, and in wounded over three hundred and fifty. It served in twelve States, marched more than eleven thousand miles, and participated in battles.

From:

Ohio In The War: Her Statesmen, Her Generals, And Soldiers In Two Volumes. Volume II: The History Of Her Regiments And Other Military Organizations, by Whitelaw Reid, publisher Moore, Wiltach, & Baldwin, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1868, pp.387-389

<https://archive.org/details/ohioinwarherstat00reid>

Also see:

Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1866, Volume 5, by Ohio. Roster Commission; Ohio. General Assembly; Ohio. Adjutant General's Dept; McKinley, William, 1843-1901; Taylor, Samuel M; Howe, James C, pp.517-561

<https://archive.org/details/ohiowarroster05howerich>